

DR. G. S. ARUNDALE

DR. GEORGE SYDNEY ARUNDALE was born in Surrey, England, on December 1st, 1878, and was educated mainly on the continent of Europe—having been a student of the Gelehrte Gymnasium at Wiesbaden. His mother having died when he was very young, he was placed in the care of his aunt, Miss Francesca Arundale, and thus came into contact with Theosophy and its founders while still a child—H. P. Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott and others often staying in Miss Arundale's house in London. In 1895 he went to Cambridge University (St. John's College) and took the degrees of B.A. and LL.B., in honours. His tutor was the late President of the General Medical Council, Sir Donald Macalister, K.C.B., and among his teachers were Professor Marshall, the great economist, Professor C. S. Kenny, Downing Professor of the Laws of England, Professor Sidgwick, Lord Acton and Dr. W. H. R. Rivers. Subsequently he went to Paris for historical research work in the Archives Nationales, and shortly afterwards became a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of London, in due course being admitted to the M.A. degree.

Deeply interested in India from early youth, he was happy to accept Mrs. Annie Besant's invitation to become associated with her and with a group of Indian workers in the establishment of a great centre of Hindu culture at Benares, and in 1903, resigning the post of assistant General Secretary of the British Section of the Theosophical Society—he had joined the Society in 1895, he

went out with Miss Arundale to India and became honorary Professor of History at the Central Hindu College, Benares. Miss Arundale at the same time began her great work among Indian girls. Later on he became honorary headmaster of the School, Vice-Principal and Principal of the College—a post which he held until 1913. During this period the College was visited by Governors and Viceroys, and by their Majesties the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress when Prince and Princess of Wales. He was elected a Fellow of the University of Allahabad, and became an examiner both to the University and to the Government of the United Provinces. Under Mrs. Besant's inspiration and guidance he did much to stir throughout India a keen enthusiasm for education based on the great ancient Indian principles, of which the western world has largely lost sight. At the invitation of the late Maharaja of Kashmir he visited that State to inspect and report on the Kashmir system of education.

In 1913 Dr. Arundale resigned his connection with the Central Hindu College and accompanied Mr. Krishnamurti and his brother Mr. Nityananda to Europe to help them with their education. In 1915 he offered his services in connection with the war, and was appointed to the civil staff of the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers in London. Not being fit for active service, he returned in 1916, at Mrs. Besant's request, to India, and became associated with her and other national leaders in the Home Rule for India campaign, being interned in 1917 by the Government of Madras together with Mrs. Besant and one of her Indian colleagues. After three months of internment they were released, and he then helped to start an important movement for

National education, nationally controlled. In this connection the Society for the Promotion of National Education was founded in Madras, its principal activity being the National University, of which Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, the famous Indian poet and mystic, became the Chancellor. This University conferred its own degrees, and was entirely independent of Government. Dr. Arundale became the Principal of the University and head of its Teachers Training Department. For his services to Indian education for many years he received the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*, his diploma being specially signed by Dr. Tagore himself. This University has now ceased to exist on account of the disturbed political situation, funds no longer being available for its maintenance.

In 1920 Dr. Arundale was asked by His Highness the Maharaja Holkar of Indore, Central India, to take charge of education in his State. On relinquishing this appointment Dr. and Mrs. Arundale travelled extensively through Europe, studying local conditions and lecturing on educational and political subjects.

In 1925 he was admitted to the priesthood and episcopate of the Liberal Catholic Church, not in order to do missionary or propaganda work, but in order to emphasize the understanding and appreciative attitude which Dr. Arundale considers every religion should show to its fellows. Dr. Arundale is primarily a Theosophist, and it was as a Theosophist that he joined the Liberal Catholic Church, so as to set in some measure an example of what he regards as the right attitude of Christianity to the faiths of the world. He believes in the Fellowship of Faiths and in the essential truth of all the great religions.

In 1926 Dr. Arundale visited Australia for the first time, and accepted office as General Secretary of the Australian Section of the Theosophical Society.

During this time he became greatly impressed with the vast potentialities of Australia, especially as regards the new type of individual arising within the great continent, and threw himself into various activities to the end of Australian national uplift. He was instrumental in helping to publish the journal *Advance Australia*, which existed for some years, and he became the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the now famous Theosophical Broadcasting Station, 2GB—an office he still holds.

In 1927 Dr. and Mrs. Arundale left Australia and once again toured Europe, afterwards proceeding to the United States of America for a three months lecturing tour in all the principal cities, covering over 10,000 miles during the tour. Dr. Arundale lectured specially on patriotism, citizenship and culture, and everywhere large audiences listened with deep interest to one who so clearly and enthusiastically expressed his vision of the greatness which might come to America if her citizens would rise to their splendid opportunities. In July, 1929, he paid a second visit to the United States, returning again in 1931, 1932 and 1933. Dr. Arundale has also visited Singapore, New Zealand and Java.

In March, 1929, he was once again in Australia, and resumed the national work which had so largely engaged his attention when he was last in Australia. He associated himself with a movement started by a few enthusiastic Australians in November, 1929, called the "Who's for Australia?" League. This movement sought to reawaken a strong spirit of patriotism and civic

service throughout the Commonwealth, irrespective of differences of party, class, denomination or business or other interest. This movement had phenomenal success under the splendid leadership of its General Secretary, Mr. A. E. Bennett.

Dr. Arundale is a very ardent believer in the great future opening up before both Australia and New Zealand, speaking of them as Lands of the Larger Hope. On Easter Day, 1930, he delivered a special address to a large gathering in Sydney, to which thousands listened-in, on "Australia: the Land of the Larger Hope". Everywhere in Australia he earnestly exhorts his audiences to realize the inspiring but heavy responsibilities of their citizenship, and to exalt the service of Australia above all other interests.

This work is an expression of Dr. Arundale's strong belief in the future of the British Empire, and in the priceless service which lies in the power of a truly noble Empire, free from the spirit of aggression and jingoism, to render to the world. His work in India for her national regeneration and freedom within the Empire is to the end of strengthening the Empire by helping each constituent element to become free, strong and happy.

Dr. Arundale has devoted considerable attention to the welfare of the working people in India, and is honorary President of the Madras Labour Union, the oldest and the largest Trade Union in India, being composed largely of the mill-hands working in the cotton mills in the suburbs of Madras. He has thus become a *persona grata* with Indian workers throughout the country.

In 1902 Dr. Arundale joined the Co-Masonic Movement, a body with Headquarters in Paris which admits

women to Masonry on equal terms with men. Under the Supreme Council of Universal Co-Masonry Lodges and Chapters of the Order have been established throughout the world, having workings identical in all essential particulars with those of the masculine Craft, whose members constantly visit the Co-Masonic Lodges and express themselves deeply appreciative of the dignity and accuracy of Co-Masonic workings in all the various degrees. Dr. Arundale is a member of the Supreme Council and has been appointed Representative of the Supreme Council for the British Empire in place of the late Dr. Besant.

Dr. Arundale is also the President of the Board of Trustees of the St. Michael Foundation at Naarden, Holland, an important international Centre established by Mevrouw Mary van Eeghen-Boissevain to promote the Theosophical spirit in various international activities, and specially to draw together in mutual understanding the countries of Europe.

In Australia, Dr. Arundale is one of the principal trustees of the Manor, Mosman, New South Wales, an important property established similarly to promote Theosophical principles in various activities, and to support Theosophical work in Australia.

Dr. Arundale has for many years taken the greatest interest in the Scout Movement. In the Central Hindu College he was the captain of the College Cadet Corps, and later became the Deputy Chief Scout of the Indian Boy Scout Movement which, in 1917, was amalgamated with Lord Baden Powell's movement at the latter's special request—the Chief Scout of the Indian movement being Dr. Besant. In appreciation of Dr. Arundale's services to scouting Lord Baden Powell

presented to him his own scout badge. Dr. Arundale is at present Vice-President of the Madras Boy Scout Council.

Dr. Arundale's main work has, of course, been with the Theosophical Society, of the General Council of which he has been a member for many years, and has also been General Secretary of its Indian and English Sections in addition to a similar office in the Australian Section. He has had the good fortune to know intimately most of the Society's greater leaders, including H. P. Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. He is a Knight of Honour of the Round Table, a movement to promote the spirit of chivalry and service among the young. He is also keenly interested in the Theosophical Order of Service, which seeks to apply practically to the world's problems the fundamental principles of Theosophy. He is a member of the famous Queen's Club of London, and of the Royal Societies Club. He is also a Freeman of the City of London and a member of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

After the passing away of Dr. Besant he was nominated Vice-President (*pro tem.*) of the Theosophical Society by the acting President, a nomination duly confirmed by the General Council in December, 1933.

He has written much on educational matters, and among his larger publications are *Nirvana* and *Mount Everest*, and in *Who's Who* his recreations are stated to be Chess and Lawn Tennis. But his chief recreation is his *work*, wholly for Theosophy and for the Theosophical Society, and very specially among the young in whom he seeks to stir enthusiasm, vision, the spirit of service, patriotism—all to the end of the promotion of the

Theosophical Society's First Object, the encouragement of Universal Brotherhood. Most of his life has been spent among the young and, like his great leader and teacher Dr. Besant with whom he worked in the closest association for over thirty years, he perceives the greatest hope for the future to lie with youth and with the spirit of youth. He exhorts the young to be sparkingly young, busily young, full of eager desire to change the whole world, free from the orthodoxies of youth and full both of youth's confidence in itself and of noble idealism. He exhorts the older generations to be young no less than the young in body, to be young in heart, to be young with the young, to give place to the young wherever wise and expedient, themselves remaining in the background to help when their longer experience is needed. He declares that an old world is dead. Let us all be young together in the new young world.

In 1920 Dr. Arundale married Srimati N. Rukmini, a Hindu lady of the highest caste and of a distinguished southern Indian family, famous for its learning and ancient lineage. Srimati Rukmini Arundale is a lady of very unusual culture, being equally at home in the culture of the West as in that of the East. She has retained her Hindu faith and customs despite her marriage to a foreigner, a fact which moved an American journal to declare that after all East and West can sometimes meet. She is a deep student of all that relates to art, both Western and Eastern; and is specially interested in the theatre and in dancing. She was a great friend of the late Anna Pavlova. Her addresses are very much appreciated for their rare charm, distinction and originality.

In 1934 he was instrumental in forming the Besant Educational Trust as a memorial to the great educational activities of Dr. Annie Besant. A Besant Memorial School was established at Adyar, Madras, in the same year, under the gracious patronage of His Excellency the Viceroy of India and the Countess of Willingdon, and of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, the Right Hon. V. Srinivasa Sastri and other eminent Indians. It is hoped in due course to have very important educational activities at Adyar in memory of Dr. Besant.

In 1934 he was elected President of the Theosophical Society for seven years in succession to Dr. Besant, by a very large majority of votes over the other candidate.

